

THE DIRECTOR
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

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National Intelligence Council

27 October 1982

NOTE FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

I have begun developing a small group of outside experts who could be our outside eyes and ears for economic warning. They would be under contract, not just ad hoc consultants. I will be talking with some possible candidates in New York during the next two days and would appreciate your suggestions and Leo Cherne's.

[Redacted Signature]

Maurice C. Ernst

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Honorable Leo Cherne
President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board
The White House

Dear Leo:

Thank you very much for your prompt and thoughtful comments on our draft paper, "The Crisis in International Finance." We have since made quite a few changes in the paper, but the main message remains the same. A copy of the finished paper is attached.

Like you, we consider this paper to be only a first step in alerting policy officials as to the problems, risks, and contingencies in international finance. CIA and other elements of the Intelligence Community have a role to play in providing early warning of developments that could do serious harm to international financial structures and to US interests generally. We should be especially concerned about possible developments which conventional wisdom does not consider highly likely, but would have serious consequences if they occurred. Effective warning along these lines will require both an analytical and a collection effort in the Community as well as close cooperation with Treasury, the Federal Reserve, and the private sector.

Maurice Ernst, National Intelligence Officer for Economics, is in the process of developing a warning mechanism on global economic issues. Warning on financial issues is going to be at the top of the list; other issues may include energy, key commodities, and aspects of international trade. He will be in touch with you to discuss this matter and we would very much appreciate your assistance and guidance.

Yours,

William J. Casey

Attachment,
As stated

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY BOARD

October 18, 1982

Confidential

Dear Bill:

I greatly appreciate your having arranged delivery by courier of the Agency's analysis of "The Crisis in International Finance." I found both the detail, the analysis of the implications and the presentation of the key points first rate. The importance of the subject could hardly be greater and I, therefore, raise certain questions which were in part stimulated by the analysis itself and in part stimulated by the conversations [redacted] with the reading which I have done as I explored the subject.

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It seems to me that the analysis stops at just the point where I believe a report on a threatening crisis produced by the CIA ought to continue if the full analytic function of an intelligence study is to be performed. The various critical possibilities have been detailed with exceptional clarity. If there are other implications which have been missed, I am unable to detect them, at least at this stage of my study of the situation.

However, anyone concerned with top policy would highly value additional judgments of a very special character. I would hope that the CIA could provide as detailed and sophisticated alerting to those steps, events or indications of any kind which would suggest that there is a high possibility that one or another of the threatening circumstances may soon occur or are more likely to occur.

To use an analogy. The analysis has provided the reader with a thorough and perceptive warning of a possibility of a number of volcanic eruptions. They may occur in the private banking system here and elsewhere. They may occur in the actions of central banks or they may occur in steps which individual debtor nations or a group of such nations may be preparing to take. Is it possible to devise a detailed description of what, in effect, would be seismic indicators? The very nature of this entire problem makes it virtually certain that when actions harmful to the international banking and financial structure or to our own banking structure and economy occur, they are likely to occur quickly and with surprise.

Honorable William J. Casey
Director of Central Intelligence
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

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Honorable William Casey

October 18, 1982

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The object of effective intelligence is to reduce the element of surprise. Such an identification of specific alerts would then better enable us to know which agency of the federal government will be in the best position to monitor the particular warning: the Federal Reserve, the Treasury Department, the State Department and the relevant embassies or elements within the intelligence community.

I make this suggestion knowing well that such a systematic approach toward more complete alerting will be difficult if not impossible. Yet, individual warnings will almost certainly be provided by the CIA when and if individual disturbing actions occur.* The latter will, of course, be vital and may occur in time to allow for some useful actions to be taken. The problems, however, are so numerous and so large, the crisis of such significance as to lead me to hope that as little as possible will be left to chance and as much as possible that may speed our awareness be systematically organized.

Having concentrated on what I believe to be useful "next steps", I want to close by repeating what I said initially. This analysis was, in my opinion, of exceptional quality.

Cordially



Leo Cherne

*As, in fact, the Agency has been doing with increasing frequency in recent weeks in both the Daily and the Economic weekly.